

Content Standards Informer

Curriculum and Instruction Unit

February 2010



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent
opi.mt.gov

In This Issue

Communication Arts

Standards

I Love to Read Month

OPI Contact:

Kris Goyins
(406) 444-0729 or
kgoyins@mt.gov

Exciting news for the area of communication arts! The Montana Board of Public Education adopted the new Communication Arts Content Standards and Performance Descriptors at the January meeting. A copy of the standards can be found: <http://opi.mt.gov/PDF/Standards/ContStds-CommArts2010.pdf>

February is "I Love to Read Month." Celebrate reading with the ideas presented on the Office of Public Instruction I Love to Read Calendar:

<http://www.opi.mt.gov/pdf/LibMedia/10ILovetoRead.pdf>

I would like to know how your school celebrates reading in February and throughout the year. Please share your ideas by emailing them to the email address below. I look forward to highlighting several schools' reading successes in a future *Content Standards Informer*.

A great way to engage students with reading and learn about the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race is Idita-Read, <http://www.idita-read.org/>. This online event for K-12 students challenges students to meet a reading goal that will take them on a journey from Anchorage to Nome. The online system will track the "mushers" as they read along the trail. Join the race that begins March 6!

Gifted and Talented

OPI Contact:

Deb Poole
(406) 444-4317 or
dpooles@mt.gov

What Does the Research Say About Grouping?

In working with educators around the state in the past weeks, one question continued to pop up. What about grouping practices? How is flexible grouping different from tracking? What does the research say?

Instructional grouping has been a teaching tool for many years and continues to be used to meet the varied learning needs of students. The controversy started in 1985, when Jeannie Oakes wrote *Keeping Track: How Schools Structure Inequality*. Tracking is the rigid placement of students in instructional groups based on standardized test scores. The *inflexible* nature of this type of grouping can pigeon-hole students. Often, grouping is abandoned by well-meaning teachers who have been scared away by the controversy surrounding Oakes' study. Educators need to realize however that instructional grouping is not an inherently flawed practice.

Flexible grouping arrangements allow teachers to make membership changes to accommodate student readiness, learning styles, and interests.
Guidelines for the use of flexible grouping.

1. No permanent groups.
 2. Groups are periodically created, modified, or disbanded to meet new needs.
 3. At times use whole group instruction.
 4. Groups vary in size from 2 or 3 to 9 or 10 depending on the group's purpose.
 5. Group membership is not fixed; it varies according to needs and purposes.
- When thoughtful, flexible grouping arrangements are used along with appropriately differentiated instruction, grouping has been proven to be beneficial for students.

Refer to Elizabeth Fogarty's article from the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented Summer 2004 for specific research regarding grouping practices.
<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/newsletter/summer04/sumer043.html>

Content Standards Informer

Curriculum and Instruction Unit

February 2010



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

opi.mt.gov

In This Issue

Science

Annual Springtime in the Rockies Technology Conference

OPI Contact:

Katie Burke
(406) 444-3557 or
kburke@mt.gov

Join math and science educators from across Montana at the Annual Springtime in the Rockies Technology Conference "21st Century Technology for Math and Science Teaching." The conference is March 26 - 28, 2010 [Friday 6:00 pm to Sunday 11:00 am] at the Montana Learning Center at Canyon Ferry Lake, Helena, MT. Presenters for this conference are a team of science, mathematics, English teachers and administrators from the Bozeman School District led by conference program coordinator Paul Andersen (science and technology specialist). Check out some of Paul's work on YouTube by going directly to <http://www.ustream.tv/bozemanbiology> or <http://www.youtube.com/bozemanbiology>. This conference is intended for science and mathematics teachers, grades 7-12 and mathematics and science coaches. The conference will address the topics of connecting your classroom, open resources for math and science, and visions for success. Go to the Montana Learning Center website for registration information <http://www.montanalearning.org/web/Springtime.html>. Registration closes March 8, 2010.

Technology

Performance Rubrics

OPI Contact:

Michael Hall
(406) 444-4422 or
mhall@mt.gov

A small workgroup will be putting finishing touches on Technology Performance Rubrics in early February. These performance rubrics describe Novice, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient and Advanced learners. In developing assessments for information literacy, these performance rubrics will be invaluable. Watch for announcements in future newsletters for availability of these resources that support the Montana Content Standards for Information Literacy/Library Media and Technology.

Content Standards Informer

Curriculum and Instruction Unit

February 2010



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
Denise Juneau, State Superintendent

In This Issue

Information Literacy/Library Media

New Web page Communication Conferences Content Standards

OPI Contact:
Colet Bartow
(406) 444-3583 or
cbartow@mt.gov

Please update your links to the Library Media page on the OPI Web site to:
<http://www.opi.mt.gov/Curriculum/libmedia/> Check out updated professional development opportunities on that page, as well as an updated message about defining school library programs for the 21st century.

Communication is critical for Montana librarians as we all weather these trying economic times. Consider joining the Montana Teacher Librarian Facebook group or follow my Twitter updates. Sign up for the SLMD Listserv by emailing me. If you haven't renewed your Montana Library Association (MLA) membership, please do so at <http://www.mtlib.org>.

Consider making a trek to Bozeman April 7-10 for the annual MLA conference. I will be doing a ½ day preconference session for teacher librarians on Wednesday, April 7. The cost for that session is \$25. Register for the conference at <http://www.mtlib.org>.

A small workgroup will be putting finishing touches on Information Literacy/Library Media Performance Rubrics in early February. These performance rubrics describe Novice, Nearing Proficiency, Proficient and Advanced learners. In developing assessments for information literacy, these performance rubrics will be invaluable. Watch for announcements in future newsletters for availability of these resources that support the Montana Content Standards for Information Literacy/Library Media and Technology.

Don't forget to celebrate I Love to Read month!

Mathematics

Professional Development

Free Technology

Doing What Works

OPI Contact:
Jean Howard
(406) 444-0706 or
jhoward@mt.gov

February – you gotta love Mathematics! One gift of love that keeps on giving is professional development. Check out all the E-Seminars, E-Workshops, Sustained PD course, Reflection Guides and other opportunities from National Council of Teachers of Mathematics. www.nctm.org/profdev.

A second gift to love is free technology found at:
<http://www.freeteach4teachers.com/2009/03/math-links-you-might-have-missed.html>.

Another gift is the web site that provides support you and all you do to teach students the love of mathematics. The [Doing What Works](http://www.doe.gov/DoingWhatWorks) website from the U.S. Department of Education features practical suggestions about ways to support teacher effectiveness, use data to improve instruction and turn around low-performing schools. For each topic, site visitors will find three kinds of information: essential concepts, recommended practices, and planning templates. Materials include expert interviews, videos, slideshows, diagrams, protocols, sample materials, and more. Materials are organized around real-life scenarios. For example:

- * How can teachers in my school more fully use the mathematics assessment data we collect?
- * How can we better track our preschoolers' development of language and literacy skills?
- * How can we help teachers organize and use data to guide instruction for our English learners who need extra help developing literacy skills?
- * How can we break down the isolation among teachers in our high school and get them working together to improve instruction?
- * What professional development should we be looking at to help our teachers learn research-based instructional strategies, like using higher-order questions?



Content **S**tandards **I**nformer

Curriculum and Instruction Unit

February 2010